

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The examiner has rejected claims 1-17 and 25-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Aono. In rejecting the claims the examiner argues that claims 1, 3, 4, 6-17 and 26-29 are obvious over the cited reference since this reference discloses at least one linear member 11 provided above base 15 and at least one additional member for connecting one end of the linear member to at least one metal film formed on the base. In this regard the examiner urges that the at least one metal film and the at least one additional member is spring 18 of the cited reference. The examiner also notes that figure 4 shows the position 20 at which the wire cathode 11 is clamped and urges that this arrangement discloses that one end of the linear member is disposed between the at least one additional member and the at least one metal film. In rejecting the claims the examiner acknowledges that the cited reference does not specifically disclose that the spring member is composed of two separate elements which include at least one metal film and at least one additional member. The examiner urges that it would be obvious to one skilled in the art to have made the spring member of two separate elements which include at least one metal film and at least one additional member. The examiner argues that modifying the cited reference in this manner will produce the claimed invention. Applicant has carefully considered this rejection but it is most respectfully traversed for the reasons discussed below.

Before discussing the issues raised by the examiner, applicant first wishes to thank the examiner for the courtesy extended to the below signed attorney during the interview on December 19, 2003. The following comments constitute a separate record of the substance of the interview as well as additional comments in support of the claimed invention.

It was agreed during the interview that the final rejection will be withdrawn since the claimed invention is not obvious over the cited reference. Thus, the finally rejected claims are patentably distinguished over the art of record without any amendments

being necessary. However, in order to better facilitate an understanding of the invention, applicant has amended claims 1 and 5 to make it clear that the base is an electrically insulating base. Support for this amendment is found in the specification on page 11, lines 28-30 wherein it is stated that reference numeral 11 represents a base or a substrate made of an insulator, e.g., a soda lime glass or a ceramic or the like".

Turning now to the rejection, it is to be noted that contrary to the examiner's observation, spring member 18 of the cited reference does not comprise a "metal film and at least one additional member" as alleged by the examiner on the top of page 3 of the office action. In this regard it was pointed out by the undersigned attorney during the interview that even if the spring of the prior art reference does comprise a metal film and at least one additional member, the reference does not disclose that the metal film is formed on the base as required by claims 1 and 5. The base 15 of the cited reference does not have the spring member connected thereto. Instead, the spring 18 of the cited reference is connected to an insulated support frame 12B.

It was agreed during the interview that one skilled in the art would not be motivated to modify the spring device of the cited reference. In this regard it is to be noted that applicant's invention does not use a spring member and thus there would be no need for one skilled in the art to consult with the teaching of the details of spring construction.

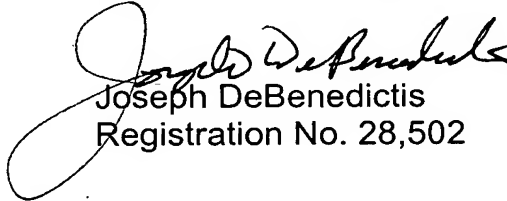
In view of the above, it is clear that the rejection is untenable and must be withdrawn. Furthermore, it is to be noted that the present amendment further distinguishes the invention over the cited reference since the amended claims presently require that the base is an insulating base. In this regard it is to be noted that base 15 of the cited reference is a "back electrode" and is thus an electrically conductive material.

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In view of the above arguments and the agreements reached with the examiner during the interview, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all the claims which are currently pending in the application.

Respectfully submitted,
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